





# CARES (Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards) Program



There are many types of quality child care and early learning programs. First 5 California recognizes that more than half of the state's children under age 5 require the care of someone other than their parents. For this reason, First 5 California is working through CARES to ensure quality child care and early learning programs for all children 0 to 5 and their families.

## Accomplishments to Date: Supporting the Early Learning Workforce

-  First 5 California released an Early Care and Education Workforce (ECE) Study to assess the current status and characteristics of the workforce and highlight areas in need of improvement.
-  CARES administrators are facilitating communication among two- and four-year-colleges to add evening and weekend courses in more convenient locations, as well as introducing English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. First 5 County Commissions are developing new BA and MA programs at local colleges and universities.
-  CARES is successful in helping to maintain early learning workforce stability: 96 percent of CARES participants are still working in the ECE field 12 months after joining the program and 93 percent are remaining 18 months later. Participants are more than twice as likely as non-participants to remain in the same center over a two-year period.
-  Participants were three-and-a-half times more likely than non-participants to obtain a Child Development Permit and twice as likely to move up to a higher level on the Permit. More than 300 of the about 4,700 degree seeking participants obtained their AA, BA, or MA in 2005-2006.



First 5 California and County Commissions have invested more than \$157 million over five years toward the CARES program and have provided more than 58,000 stipends by:

-  Issuing incentives to about 12,000 caregivers annually to encourage early learning teachers and providers to continue their education and stay in the field.
-  Providing educational and career development programs for participants, including academic advising services and professional development plans.

*"I cannot say how much it has meant for me to be recognized and rewarded for being and staying in the child care field. A child care provider's job can be stressful and difficult. This extra incentive has been very appreciated. Every year it seems I re-evaluate whether I want to continue in this profession. This financial bonus has made a difference in how I have decided to continue in this profession."*

*– Julie Walter, Family child care provider*